

Cutler Grasslands

Cutler

Description:

This focus area encompasses several peatlands and one of the largest known “bluejoint meadow” natural communities in Maine. These open habitats are embedded within forested stands of varying degrees of past disturbance, ranging from early successional aspen groves to a spruce stand over 100 years old.



Bluejoint meadow grassland April 2004

At over 1,000 acres, the bluejoint meadow along East Stream is a mosaic of upland and wetland types with a history of fire. Research by Krall (1994) suggests that these meadows were initially created by fire in the mid 19th century. The meadows have burned repeatedly in the 20th century and have been targeted for prescribed burns in past management plans by the state. Krall’s study also suggests, however, that fire may not be necessary to keep the meadows open. Blue-joint grass may inhibit tree regeneration by forming dense mats and preventing seed germination.

One of the largest bogs in the focus area is the ~120 acre huckleberry – crowberry bog along Bagley Stream. Black crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) and baked apple-berry (*Rubus chamaemorus*), both characteristic of this maritime bog type, occur frequently here. Other peatlands in this focus area lack these characteristic maritime species

In general, forested stands in this area are comparatively young and low in volume, reflecting combinations of past spruce-budworm, fire, heavy harvesting, and weather damage. Bureau of Public Land stand type maps, for example, indicate no sawtimber stands within the public lands. A few mature stands remain, such as a 100+ year old spruce stand near Cocoa Mountain.

A yellow rail was documented along Bog Brook during breeding season in 1991, but it has not been confirmed since then.

Rare Species and Exemplary Natural Community Table for Cutler Grasslands

Common Name	Latin Name	S-RANK	G-RANK	State Status
<i>Exemplary Natural Communities</i>				
Bluejoint Meadow		S3	G4G5	N/A
Maritime Spruce – Fir Forest		S4	G4G5	N/A
Sheep Laurel Dwarf Shrub Bog		S4	G5	N/A
Huckleberry – Crowberry Bog		S3	G3G5	N/A
<i>Rare Animals</i>				
Yellow Rail	<i>Coturnicops noveboracensis</i>	SPB	G4	SC

Other Habitats Mapped by MDIFW:

Freshwater Wading Bird/Waterfowl Habitat

Conservation Considerations:

All-terrain vehicles (ATV) use of the area has increased in recent years, and the Bureau of Public Lands is working with local ATV users to direct trails in appropriate locations. In a broader fashion, the Bureau of Public Lands is revising its management plan for the Cutler Unit. Part of this evaluation will be a consideration of vehicular use (e.g., ATVs), prescribed fire, and other management concerns.

Protection Status: Nearly all of the Focus Area is owned by the Bureau of Public Lands, including 3,495 acres that have been designated as an Ecological Reserve. Adjacent private lands support mixed forest, blueberry barrens, as well as small peatlands and part of the Bog Brook bluejoint meadow.